



Fridley

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

A Look Back on
Fridley's "Night of Terror"

APRIL 2015
NO. 193

We believe in a Fridley that is a safe, vibrant, friendly and stable home for families and businesses.

6431 University Avenue NE
Fridley, MN 55432
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www.FridleyMN.gov
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Councilmember-at-Large – Robert L. Barnette

Councilmember 1st Ward – James T. Saefke

Councilmember 2nd Ward – Dolores M. Varichak

Councilmember 3rd Ward – Ann R. Bolkcom

City Manager – Wally Wysopal

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Time Stood Still: 7:10 p.m. May 6, 1965

One tragic night in May is still very much alive in the memories of those who experienced the tornadoes of 1965. Fridley's "Night of Terror" rages on to this day, and every spring, those warm evenings stir up apprehension and fear for those who survived that fateful night.

We honor all the heroes of that night: those who tracked the storms and sent out warning after warning; those who grabbed their neighbors and provided shelter in their basements; the public service officers who worked all night in rescue efforts; the doctors and nurses who catered to countless injuries; the dignitaries who pledged to provide financial support in the months that followed; the Red Cross and community volunteers who provided clothing, food and shelter to those who lost so much beneath the rubble; and to the residents and business owners who found the strength to rebuild and start new.

Bill Nee, Fridley Mayor when these tornadoes hit in 1965, said it best in his recount of the night for the Fridley Silver Anniversary magazine published by the *Fridley Sun* in 1974. "The most impressive part of all was the magnificent spirit of those whose homes were destroyed. It was a rare spirit of courage and mutual support which to this day characterizes many Fridley neighborhoods."

Inside this edition of Community Connection, you will read the stories of residents, in their own words, and experience the terror that damaged or destroyed 1,525 homes in Fridley. That is one in four houses.

There is some controversy over that night on May 6, 1965. Eyewitnesses to this day, and the news reports from 1965, note three different tornadoes ripping their way through Fridley. Eight years after the event, based on a new theory about multiple vortices existing within a single tornado, all official records and maps were changed to indicate two tornadoes hit Fridley. Regardless of how it is described, the results were devastating. Fears raged on as the winds subsided. Families were separated, many for several hours. Fridley lost two souls on that terrible night, and a total of 13 across the Twin Cities (reports from 1965 indicated 14



fatalities, but it was changed to 13 with the 1973 revisions). Amazing when you look at the destruction the tornadoes left in the wake, but still too many. We honor the memory of Fridley victims Helene Hawley (4 months) and Annie Demery (66 years).

As we approach its 50th anniversary, we take a look back on the stories and strength of our community. We invite everyone to join the Fridley Historical Society at a memorial service on May 6 at the Fridley Community Center.



Join us as we recreate the events of that terrible night through the stories of those who were there. Celebrate the strength that led to a new tomorrow, and honor those we lost.

The Fridley Historical Society invites you to "50th Anniversary - 1965 Tornadoes"

Wednesday, May 6

Ceremonies will begin at 6 p.m.

Fridley Community Center, 6085 7th Street NE

Featuring stories from retired Fridley Fire Chief Robert Aldrich, Donald Meyer from the school district, Rev. Robert Kendall of Fridley Methodist, and former WCCO radio personality and executive Robinson Brown. We welcome you to listen, share and pay tribute to the perseverance of the people of Fridley who rebuilt our community.



A Junior High Ripped Apart *by Tara Arlene Innmon*

Tara Arlene Innmon was 14 years old on May 6, 1965. The darkening sky concerned them, but did not prevent Aunt Ellen and Tara from attending an event at the junior high. Her mother and brothers were to join them shortly. The rest of her family would never make it to the school. Tara describes that night in vivid detail within her memoirs, ©Arlene Innmon 2014 (excerpt from memoir in progress):

“The sky has become dark as night, and it’s only seven o’clock. My math teacher stands out in the hall watching us as we walk past. I didn’t

know then that I would never be in that classroom with her again.

The twister spins angrily out of control, bending down here and there over ranch style houses to watch them flick away like dandelion seeds as it heads toward the junior high. We walk into the art room and my teacher yells, ‘Everybody out of the room! It’s a tornado hitting the other side of the building!’ Behind her through the window, the sky is neon green.



We whip around and run out with a crowd right behind us. The lights are out. The hallway is pitch-black. A man screams, “Lie on your stomach against the walls and cover your head.”

The wind roars. Maybe it does sound like a train as I’ve been told, but I don’t notice because of the other sounds. Glass shatters from down the long hallway. Popping, ripping, crunching come further down the hall.

The twisted monster tramples and spits on the junior high, tearing off chunks of it to toss into the air. Just as quickly as it hits, it is gone. The roaring, ripping apart stops. Aunt Ellen takes my hand and we walk towards the hallway where we hear water splashing. Silent shadowy figures move slowly with us. We seem to be in a dark cave. Gravel-like pieces crunch as we step forward and climb over boulders of debris. We step in puddles from the waterfalls pouring

down through holes where the roof had been. I can’t tell where anything is anymore.”

They were told no one was hurt, but would later learn that a woman broke her back in the gym when roof debris fell. As Tara and her aunt left the school after that first tornado hit, they saw dozens of shattered windshields in the parking lot. “There was a strange, dark flatness around us where houses used to be. Whenever the lightening covered the sky, I saw silhouettes of toilets standing nakedly against an angry open sky.” Houses were completely gone. Active power lines were down everywhere. Tara eventually made it home safe to her family and her unharmed home, and she would later shake hands with Vice President Humphrey during his visit to assess the damage. Tara finished the rest of the school year at Riverwood Elementary, taking classes in the cafeteria and gym. The City was left with months of cleanup; years of rebuilding; and a lifetime of gratitude for the safety of loved ones.

“Tornadoes: The Art of Remembering” Open Call for Original Works of Art

Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts seeks art from those who experienced the horrific tornado event of 1965, those who have heard the stories, or those who wish to express the power of a tornado in artistic means. This exhibit is open to everyone regardless of age or experience. All works need to reference a tornado or a tornado’s power.

Work Drop-off:

April 28 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
April 29 from 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The exhibition will be on view in the galleries at Banfill- Locke Center for the Arts from May 2 to 16, 2015. Limit of 2 submitted works. No pre-registration necessary but presentation requirements apply. For details, visit www.banfill-locke.org or call 763-574-1850.



Bradon Kuehn, Twice the Speed of You and Me, Oil on Canvas, 2015.

Visit “The Art of Remembering,” on display May 2-16. Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts is housed in the Banfill Tavern, a Greek Revival building built in 1847 along the banks of the Mississippi River, 6666 East River Road, Fridley. Parking and admission are free. Galleries are open Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Grandpa’s Ice Cream presents... Name that ice cream!

Design an ice cream flavor representing the Fridley Tornadoes! Winner receives shop fame and a free Ice Cream Social Party Pak for 25 people. Send us the flavor name, ingredients and a short story about why your flavor represents the Fridley Tornadoes. Include your contact information.

Send your entry to Grandpa’s ice Cream by email: grandpas@grandpasicecream.biz. Or by mail to: 1258 E Moore Lake Drive, Fridley, MN 55432. Deadline for entry is April 27, 2015.

The owner and staff will be selecting the winner based on the name of the flavor, the story, and ingredient availability.

Winning Tornado Flavor will be available for tasting the first Week of May.





A Long Night at Mercy Hospital *by Dr. D K Johnston*

This is my best recollection of that hectic night in 1965. I think we dealt with some twenty-odd operative cases while the emergency room at Mercy handled over 200. The way the community responded was most impressive.

I remember standing in front of our dining room window. I saw a funnel cloud just across Moore Lake as it changed direction. It took the roof off the high school and then veered to destroy Hayes school. A garbage can came bowling along from the west, lifted over the house and rolled up Hillcrest Drive. A neighbor’s little travel trailer raised up four feet, swapped ends and then settled down nearly exactly in its old spot.

That was the moment we finally heeded the radio warnings, and my family of five took refuge in our basement. As we waited, the radio announcer said medical help was needed at Mercy Hospital due to an influx of injured. Things had quelled around us so we decided I would go up there, and the others would stay below in our basement make-shift accommodations.

My route took me north on Highway 65 until I became part of a massive traffic jam at Osborne Road. Fallen, tangled traffic lights and electric lines closed the intersection. My recourse was to seek the folks trying to sort things out and somehow get through. An officer answered my plea, and led me under downed wires and poles, snapping and cracking in all directions. He put me in touch with a deputy on the road on the other side of the tangled mess whom he instructed to deliver me to Mercy. The next few minutes included the wildest ride I’ve ever had in my life. The rain sheeted down, and to me, visibility was zero. I glanced at the speedometer

and my new friend was going 85 miles per hour. A few miles past Northtown Mall, we emerged into the clear: no wind, no rain and clear skies.

At the hospital, they put me to good use straight away. It turned out they only had one nurse and three anesthesiologists. We worked two operating rooms and improvised to make a third. I ran one room and a colleague named Jim Mathews from the University was in another. We were busy the entire night.

My first case was a lady with a crushed chest, and badly in need of a chest tube. She was immediately stabilized and moved to intensive care. Next was a nine-year old boy with compound fractures of both ankles. He was as game a little fellow as one could ask for. There were one or two short procedures after that, but my last case was a tough one. A lady in her sixties had a brick wall collapse on her. She had a compound fracture of her left femur and horrendous soft tissue damage to her thigh. The surgeon put a hand in a laceration near her hip and he could then extend his hand and arm to emerge near her knee. She had lost much blood and continued to do so. He pinned the bone and packed the wound open, for later closure. She left the table in stable but guarded condition.

Jim Mathews drove me home. I noticed a distinct odor of wet lumber in the air. The army had closed Hwy. 65 north of 100 (what is now I-694), but I lived about a mile north. We had to explain ourselves and show ID before Jim could drop me off.

I had no follow-up on my patients but I did hear the last patient at the end of my night stayed in the hospital about a month and then went home to continue her recovery.

Events at Mississippi Library, Fridley

Saturday, May 2 at 2:00 p.m.
Community Conversation: Remembering the 1965 Tornadoes
What are your lasting memories from that night? How did the tornadoes impact your life? Library staff will record and share your memories, with your permission. Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the Anoka County Library.

Monday, May 4 at 6:00 p.m.
Tornado Stories and Science
Come to the library and make your very own tornado! All twisters will be safely contained in a bottle. Learn about the science behind a tornado. What conditions are necessary for a tornado to form? Why are tornadoes so destructive? Listen to stories about kids who survived tornadoes in real life, and do other science experiments relating to weather. This program is designed for students in grades 1-5.

Please register in advance for either event at anokacountylibrary.org

Just Another Family TV Night *by Norma Anderson*

Norma Anderson was at home with her husband and two children, ages 7 and 14, on that night. It was just another day, sitting around watching Davy Crockett on the television. Minutes later, everything changed.

“An announcement ran across the bottom of the screen saying to take cover. Things were getting darker and windy, and the four of us went downstairs. The wind blew for some time and then, as these storms do, it went beyond imagination... absolutely quiet.

Then the real wind came with the crashing and ripping of nails. Power lines hit the ground and you could see balls of fire out the basement windows. It didn’t last long but felt as if it went on forever. When it was calm again, my husband went upstairs and saw the destruction. He chatted with neighbors, brought the mother and child from across the street to our

basement, and shut the door just before the second tornado hit. And later the third.

Many neighbors sat in a circle in our basement after the storms passed. We passed around a bottle of whiskey for a silent sip. Our house stood while ones around us were completely gone.

A person never forgets that sound, and I am still frightened of storms. We did not have any power, kept the fridge shut to protect the food, and the next day got ice for the cooler. The National Guard was out almost immediately, so were the looters. For quite a while we needed a pass to get in and out of Fridley.

The entire summer it was one storm after another, no more tornadoes but severe storms. After enough nights of picking up our children and running to the basement, my husband built

a bed downstairs and most nights the children went to sleep there. We got tetanus shots because of all the nails in the lawns. No one in our neighborhood was hurt, but there was lots of damage and some people had to stay in motels for a while.

The heroes in our neighborhood were the adults who looked after each other and the children. Police and police auxiliary were out after and during the night, later joined by the National Guard. The mayor did a good job getting things organized and pulled together. Hayes School and the playground equipment blew away so our children went to Stevenson. The parents of children who attended Hayes Elementary were fortunate that school was not in session.

The sounds and memories of that night are still there.

A Narrow Miss by Deb Skogen

It was a hot, sunny day, and my dad was working in north Minneapolis. My older sister, Teri, decided she was going to the Science Fair/Open House at Fridley Jr. High, with or without my parents, so she rode her bicycle. Shortly after she left, the temperature dropped suddenly and the sky started getting black. My mom heard on the news that a tornado had hit Navarre and was headed our way, so she called my dad, told him to leave work, pick-up Teri and get home. I remember the details so vividly – eating macaroni and cheese in the kitchen and listening to The Munsters television show when the power went off (about 7:05-7:10 pm). Sirens started blaring. Heavy winds bent the tall poplar trees in our front yard in half. My mother told me and my little sister to go to the basement and wait in the furnace room until the storm was over. Little did we know, we would end up spending all night in that basement.

Five minutes later, scared of being alone in the dark, we went back upstairs. It was dark outside and the large picture window was kind of moving in and out. My mom put us in the bedroom closet to get us away from windows and asked us to wait there. While the storm was raging, mom stood by the front window waiting for my dad. She watched as the tornado shredded the neighbor’s garage across the street. Luckily, in our little neighborhood between University and Central south of Highway 100, we were on the edge of the storm. Our house was not destroyed or damaged like many others.

My dad made it home about an hour later with Teri and her bicycle. They came running into the house and we all hit the basement. Mom had gathered blankets, flashlights, candles and

the radio for us. We spent several more hours in the basement listening to WCCO radio relay the events of that night.

The next day we explored our neighborhood and saw the devastating destruction of the rest of the city. The National Guard was called out and people had to show their identification or driver’s license to get around in town until it could be cleaned up. We were all without power and telephone service. The one thing that I do not remember is hearing the “train” noise associated with the tornado. Maybe I didn’t hear it was because we were not in the damage zone.

Dad’s car had been at the Jr. High when one of the tornadoes hit the school. The wind was so strong it had pitted sand into the paint of the car and broken some of the windows. Years afterwards, we were still amazed that when you skimmed your finger against the ceiling of the car, sand would still come down. In discussions later with my dad, he remembered the tornado hitting almost as soon as he got into the school. He found the drinking fountain across from the gymnasium and held on for dear life. He then was able to somehow find my sister and drive home. To this day, Teri is deathly afraid of storms.



The Aftermath

The City experienced \$14.5 million in total losses, of which \$5 million was to the Fridley school system. Hayes Elementary was completely destroyed. Fridley Junior High lost an entire wing, most of its roof and windows, and sustained excessive interior water damage. Fridley High School, Parkview Elementary and Woodcrest Elementary also suffered severe damage. City Hall was hit hard. The whole rear wall of the Fire Department was blown out, and there was excessive damage to the garages and much of the City equipment.

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” said Vice President Humphrey to a crowd at Fridley Commons following his tour of the area. “The damage I’ve seen is comparable to a war.” (Source: Suburbia’s Longest Night published by Tri-County Publications, Inc., 1965)

In total, 1,100 Fridley homes were damaged, and 425 homes were completely destroyed. As many as 6 distinct funnels hit across the Twin Cities and outlying areas that night. In total, 13 people were killed and 683 injured. It could have been significantly worse. The weather service and local television and radio stations worked endlessly to get the word out to people about the severity of the

storms, their paths and the immediate need to seek cover. It was also the first time in history that civil defense sirens were used to indicate severe weather.

If you have the chance, be sure to check out “Weather Permitting” at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. Experience a tornado from a recreated 1960s home in a powerful multimedia presentation called “Get to the Basement!” It focuses on the sights and sounds, as well as the human experiences and emotions evoked by the Fridley tornadoes of May 6, 1965.

Visit the Mississippi branch library (410 Mississippi St. NE, Fridley) during the month of May to see the “Commemoration of 1965 Tornadoes” display presented by the Fridley Historical Society. Beginning in June, a permanent exhibit will be housed at the Fridley History Center, open the 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month and free to visit.

Join us on May 6 at the Fridley Community Center for an emotional and fascinating evening. Honor the strength, sacrifice, loss and determination of the 1965 Fridley community. To learn more, visit www.FridleyHistory.org.

The House Left Standing

by Bob Barnette

My wife and I lived at 64th and Jackson Street with our two little boys, Bob, 3 years, and Tom, 2. Jane was seven months pregnant on that night.

I was out fixing a fence in the yard when Jane told me to come in because there had been tornadoes sighted out in Mound and Lake Minnetonka and that weather was heading our way. I remember thinking that it would probably not get to Fridley. It was a fleeting thought. Soon the clouds came in, and the wind was replaced with a greenish calm.

The four of us retreated to the basement. Jane brought down some mattresses from the boys beds and we all hunkered down as the tornado hit, the first of about four that eventually hit the area. After the first one passed, Jane went upstairs to get the boys’ pajamas. When the next one came roaring in, she flew down the stairs, carrying pajamas and our yet unborn daughter. (I hid bravely behind the mattresses hollering “hurry up”!)

We could hear the debris hitting the house. My parents, who lived in north Minneapolis, kept calling to see how we were after hearing the radio reports. Our phone was upstairs so we crawled up there to answer the phone and my dad kept saying, “Get downstairs!” We kept saying, “Quit calling!”

After an hour or so, it appeared the storms had passed so we gingerly went back upstairs to see if there was any damage. None was evident but, as I looked to the west, I could see lights on University Avenue, six blocks away. All five houses directly across the street on Bennett Drive were gone. Amazingly, as we discovered later, from one of the homes that was destroyed, a pan on the stove remained untouched, still standing where it had been left prior to the storms, as the entire house around it disappeared. People began to appear on the street, mostly in disbelief. Our house miraculously had only some shingles torn off but homes two blocks to the east were severely damaged. Apparently the tornado had touched down, then jumped over our house, and hit again behind us.

The entire city was devastated. I believe over 1,000 homes were destroyed or severely damaged. Luckily, there was very little loss of life. The National Guard was called out almost immediately and stayed in the city for several days to prevent looting. Several friends of ours, whose homes had been hit, spent the night with us and eventually relocated in apartments nearby until their homes were restored.

I was teaching at Fridley High School and the high school suffered some damage but classes continued until the end of the school year...tough families I’ll tell you. The “original” Hayes Elementary was completely destroyed and had to be rebuilt. Mayor Nee worked to get necessary resources to clean up and rebuild the City. Fridley not only recovered but improved!

Meet Joyce Nelson Shellhart — An Inspiration for Inner Strength

Some people find inspiration in art, in music or in nature. For Fridley resident Joyce Nelson Shellhart, a navy blazer changed her life.

“I wore out that blazer,” says Joyce. “You only have a few seconds to make that first impression and it really begins with how you see yourself. You need to first impress the person in the mirror – you.” Joyce did not always want to be noticed. She was once the “mouse in the corner.” Meet her today and it’s hard to picture a wallflower.

Joyce suffers from Multiple Sclerosis (MS), but it does not define her. After 20 years of an abusive marriage, she divorced and struggled as a single, low-income mother, but it did not break her down. Today, she is a successful businesswoman, author and professional speaker on actions, attitudes and image. She also volunteers her time and talents throughout the community and the Twin Cities. In 1997, she founded a Twin Cities organization called “Ready for Success”. This program provides low-income men and women with clothing and personal presentation advice during times of transition to help them succeed in the workforce, because sometimes all it takes is a blazer to change your life.

Joyce relates to others by sharing her own journey from “victim to survivor to thriver.” She has published two editions of her book, “Dress to Impress, How a Navy Blazer Changed My Life.” Her



ability to connect with people through honesty and humor really engages an audience and gives them the tools to find their inner strength. She speaks regularly at the Scott County Workforce Center, presents throughout the country at workshops and conferences, and dedicates much of her time and talent at Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts.

“The wonderful thing about art is that it allows you to make mistakes, and to take that mistake and recreate it into something new.”

The words “I can’t” are not in Joyce’s vocabulary. She contributes much of her success to her artistic background, her right brain mentality. As an artist, she exercised that part of her mind that allows her

to think creatively, outside the box. She looks for solutions. From finding a way to enroll her children in activities that she couldn’t afford, to remodeling a room on a zero dollar budget, Joyce makes it happen.

Persistent and driven, Joyce simply does not give up. She started a writer’s group on Tuesday mornings, and for the first 6 months she sat in the room alone, every week. Then one day, a young writer walked through the door. Today, that group of one has blossomed into a dozen on any given Tuesday, and continues to grow. Joyce is starting a monthly evening group as well, and continues her love of teaching with one-on-one guidance for area youth. She coordinates the annual holiday tea for Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts and recently finished remodeling the writer’s room upstairs. (Although she is still looking for a drop-down desk in cherry if anyone would like to donate to a great organization!)

“Joyce has an amazing magnetism that draws newcomers to the Art Center, and she is a great ambassador for all we do here,” says Bethany Whitehead, Executive Director of Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts. “I just love Joyce’s friendly, genuine and positive outlook.”

Joyce has been dealt more than her share of obstacles. She not only rises above them, but uses them to lift her up. In her words, “Your life is an amazing journey, go first class!”

Fridley Fire

Congratulations to Firefighter Todd Fisher for his new officer appointment to Lieutenant and to Firefighter Mike Spencer for his new officer appointment to Captain.



Welcome to Fridley Fire’s newest recruit Thaddeus (Jamey) Jude who will begin his training with Fridley Fire as he joins Station 2.

All three were recognized at a badge pinning ceremony in the Fridley Council Chambers on February 2 led by Assistant Chief Matt Kohner.



Fire Chief John Berg administers the oath of office to Lieutenant Todd Fisher.



Captain Mike Spencer receives his new badge, pinned on by his son.



Sponsored by Fridley Police, Fire and Recreation with help from local businesses and awesome volunteers

June 16 & 17 • 8 am – 4:30 pm
at Commons Park, rain or shine
\$30 – registration required, spots fill FAST
For youth completing grades 2 & 3

- Safety topics, games and fun include:
- Fire Safety
 - Seat Belts
 - Animals
 - Personal and water safety, bullying and more!
 - Bicycle
 - First aid
 - Outdoor
 - Electrical

Snacks and lunch served daily. The event concludes with a family graduation ceremony at Fridley High School the evening of June 17.

Questions? Call Liz @ 763-572-3626
Register online at www.FridleyMN.gov
or call 763-572-3570.

Severe Weather Awareness Week April 13 - 17

Tornado Drills: Thursday, April 16 at 1:45 p.m. and 6:55 p.m.

According to the National Weather Service, Minnesota experiences an average of 40 tornadoes per year. Knowing what to do can save lives. Take advantage of Severe Weather Awareness Week to prepare: make an emergency plan, practice it and build an emergency kit. A NOAA weather radio is still one of the best warning methods, especially for storms occurring late at night when most are asleep. To learn more about spring storms and what you should do when severe weather strikes, visit the National Weather Service at www.nws.noaa.gov/os/severeweather.

Possible Comcast Change: Will It Affect You?



Fridley Celebrates National Trails Day! Fun for the Whole Family

Join us for activities along the great Mississippi River Trail on June 6. Fridley landmarks include Islands of Peace Park, Manomin County Park, Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts, Riedel Farm Estate and Riverfront Regional Park. Discover what is special about each!

When: events start at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 6 and continue all afternoon

Not-to-be-missed:

- 1:00 p.m. – Islands of Peace Park —Proclamation with Mayor Scott Lund, free popcorn and entertainment. Learn about future plans for the area
- 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Kid’s River-Inspired Art Workshop at Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts —Adults can paint, too, with plein air river painting! (check for times and details)
- Around 2:30 p.m. – Join the Annual Fridley Community Bike or Hike —Bike ride launches from Islands of Peace Park and tours the trail south to Riedel Farm and Riverfront Regional Park. Family-friendly! —Hike down to the River’s edge or along the trails; enjoy bird watching and the natural beauty around you

For more information on the celebration activities taking place along the Mississippi River parks and trail in Fridley, see the city website at www.FridleyMN.gov.

Fridley Community Calendar

April

- 1 Appeals Committee
- 2 HRA Meeting
- 6 Charter Commission
- 6 Parks & Recreation Commission
- 13 City Council Meeting
- 14 Environmental Quality & Energy Commission
- 15 Planning Commission
- 18 Springbrook Park Cleanup Day
- 27 City Council Meeting

May

- 2 Residential Recycling Drop-Off Day
- 4 Charter Commission
- 4 Parks & Recreation Commission
- 6 Appeals Commission
- 6 50th Anniversary of the 1965 Tornadoes
- 7 HRA Meeting
- 11 City Council Meeting
- 12 Environmental Quality & Energy Commission
- 16 SNC Spring Fling Festival
- 20 Planning Commission
- 25 City Offices Closed in Observance of Memorial Day
- 26 City Council Meeting

NOTE: City Council and Commission meetings start at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Municipal Center, 6431 University Avenue NE. The public is welcome.

Hearing impaired persons who need an interpreter or other persons with disabilities who require auxiliary aids and would like to attend a meeting, should contact Roberta Collins at 763-572-3500 at least one week in advance.

Comcast customers may have heard the buzz regarding the company’s possible merger with Time Warner. Those rumors are true. As part of that merger, Comcast is transferring the entire Twin Cities subscription base, almost 4 million subscribers, to a new company called GreatLand Connections. The process for all of this is currently at the federal level. It still needs to go through the Security and Exchange Commission, Department of Justice and the FCC.

How is the City involved?

The City’s role in cable TV franchising is very limited. The transfer of cable companies is not the result of any action taken by the City of Fridley. In January, the City Council did approve the transfer of the cable franchise. The City cannot disapprove the transfer without being able to prove the new cable company is not technically and financially qualified to operate a cable system. Our review, along with hundreds of other cities, indicated they meet the minimum standards.

The City of Fridley does not choose what cable company(s) serve Fridley. We cannot control cable

rates, channels, programming, equipment or service packages.

On your cable bill, you may notice a phone number and address for the Franchise Authority. That is us, not Comcast. The Franchise Authority number is provided as a last resort to assist you with unresolved complaints and related issues such as cable lines on the ground. You should try to solve these issues directly through the cable company first.

What happens next?

GreatLand Connections could become the cable provider in Fridley as early as later this year, but keep in mind the approval process for the merger is still at the federal level and the timeline is uncertain. The City does not know the procedures Comcast and GreatLand will go through to inform existing customers, nor do we know how the transition of email accounts will be handled. Equipment and telephone numbers should stay the same. A switch in cable providers would change Comcast email addresses and bill payments. We will keep you informed as we learn more.

2015 Street Improvements

Spring in Minnesota usually means road construction season! This year in Fridley, street resurfacing and improvements will be done in the areas of Hwy. 47 (University Avenue) and Main Street, from 49th Avenue north to I-694. There will be access to these streets throughout the construction.

MnDOT will also be completing the Hwy. 65 work this spring (rescheduled from last fall). They will be resurfacing a four-mile segment of Hwy. 65 between 53rd Avenue and just south of Moore Lake Drive. In addition to repaving, they will update pedestrian crossings and improve safety of bus stops and pedestrian connections. Traffic impact should be minimal.



Recycling

Time for Spring Cleaning!

Let us help!

Spring Residential Recycling Day is Saturday, May 2
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Rain or Shine
Fridley Public Works, 400 71st Avenue (behind old Columbia Arena)

What we take for FREE:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper for Secure Shredding• Carpeting and Pads (tied in 6-ft rolls, no scraps)• Up to 3 appliances• Most electronics and TVs 30" or smaller: first 3 FREE!• Keyboards/mouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cell phones• Handheld games• Circuit boards and similar items• Small engines (lawn mowers, snow blowers, weed whips – drain all fluids)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scrap metal• Bicycles• Fluorescent bulbs (limit 10/household)• Batteries• Cardboard
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What we take for a small fee (cash or check only):

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air Conditioners: \$10 each• Appliances (after first 3 free): \$5 each• Electronics (after first 3 free): \$5 each (except oversized TVs, see below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversized TVs, Consoles or Rear Projection (larger than 30"): \$20 each• Mattresses and Box Springs: \$10 per piece
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Open to all Fridley residents, bring a photo ID and recycling postcard. Look for the drop-off event postcard in your mail soon.

Furniture and household goods not accepted. Please bring those items to the local Goodwill or Salvation Army if in good condition. Otherwise, please contact your local garbage hauler.

Old prescription medications can be dropped off Monday - Friday during normal business hours at the convenient drop box in the lower level of City Hall.

Questions? Visit www.FridleyMN.gov or call 763-572-3594.

Complete detailed information coming soon!

New Venue - New Festival!

Fridley '49er Days - Common Park (61st & 7th Street) June 25-27

Grant Helps Volunteer Efforts at Springbrook

The Springbrook Nature Center Foundation was thrilled to accept a \$10,000 grant from Xcel Energy in January. This generous grant will support the essential volunteer program at Springbrook Nature Center.

“We rely on our wonderful volunteers year-round,” says Springbrook Director Mike Maher. “Special events, such as our annual Pumpkin Night or Spring Fling, require hundreds of volunteers to be successful. Then we have our regular volunteers, those who have become part of the Springbrook family, who help out with general maintenance, park cleanup, working with children, leading our education programs and just about every other aspect of running the center.”

“Xcel Energy is pleased to continue its support of Springbrook,” stated Joanna Ramirez Barrett, corporate giving director of Xcel Energy. “These funds will help provide the necessary tools and equipment for grounds improvements, educational

materials for volunteer interpreters, and software to manage and track the work of volunteers.”

With its 3 miles of trails, live reptiles and hands-on exhibits, Springbrook has been named a “Must See” place to visit by *StarTribune* and one of 13 “hot spots” to view wildlife in the metro area by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Springbrook Nature Center Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the Springbrook Nature Center. They work in partnership with the Springbrook Nature Center staff and the City of Fridley, and have been a vital part of fundraising efforts and center development.



Pictured above (left to right) Ceace Haagensen, Sr. Representative, Community Affairs, Xcel Energy; Malcolm Mitchell, Chair, Springbrook Nature Center Foundation; Donna Bahls, Vice Chair, Springbrook Nature Center Foundation; and Mike Maher, Director, Springbrook Nature Center.

Coming Up at SNC! Coming Up at SNC! Coming Up at SNC!

Annual Volunteer Kick-off and Cleanup Day!

Get your hands dirty and dig in to celebrate Earth Day.
Saturday, April 18 from 8:00 a.m. – Noon, lunch to follow.
We provide tools, gloves and bags. Just bring your energy and helping hands!

Don't miss this year's

Spring
fling

festival

Fun for the Whole Family!

Saturday, May 16 • 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Join us in Celebrating the Outdoors Together!

Climbing Wall

Cockadoodle Zoo

MinnAqua

International Wolf Center

Norm the Magician

Backpack Bootcamp

n'Motion Dance

Nature Play areas on the trail

Music

Master Gardener

Guest Author

Concessions and more!

\$6/person. Cash or check only.

Springbrook Nature Center: 100 85th Ave NW, Fridley • 763-572-3588

Camp Springbrook

Where the Fun Never Ends

Weekly sessions, June 15 – August 21

Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Different theme each week.

Camp activities catered to each age group.

Ages 5 & 6, 7-9 and 10-12.

Fridley residents: \$140/week

Non-residents: \$150/week

Call Springbrook at 763-572-3588

for more information, or register online at

www.FridleyMN.gov

SPRING Open House – Project Update

Exciting plans are continuing at Springbrook with the next step in the SPRING (Sanctuary Protection and Renewal Into the Next Generation) project. This comprehensive plan to revitalize the seven-acre park entrance and building will allow the Nature Center to expand programming, host weddings and events, and continue to provide world-class environmental education to an ever-growing audience.

The City shared plans and excitement for the new nature center with the public at an open house on February 2. This well-attended event gave community members the opportunity to view design plans, offer comments and ask questions about the SPRING project. City staff, Council members, architects and members of the Springbrook Foundation answered questions about the exciting changes to come.

15% Off

Fridley
Liquor

Total Non-Sale Purchase

Valid at Fridley Liquor

No limits. No other discounts apply. Good through April 30, 2015

Enjoying Life to the Fullest: Meet Our Senior Center Staff

“I come to work to have fun!” says Connie Thompson, Fridley Senior Center coordinator. “I really believe in our program. It makes a difference not only for those who participate, but for our entire community.”

A program that started as one club, Friendly Fridley Folks, and included card playing and senior dining, has blossomed into a one-stop shop for the baby boomers and seniors of our community. Connie Thompson started with Fridley Parks & Recreation 36 years ago and has really seen the Senior Center grow from its infancy. Her goal when she became coordinator of the Senior Center was to develop an environment that not only served the important social aspect of a senior program, but addressed a greater need, a “whole life experience.”

Today the Fridley Senior Center offers a holistic approach. The all-inclusive center offers legal aid, tax assistance, nutrition, health programs, fitness classes, thought-provoking discussions, outings and recreation. They have even teamed up with Fridley Community Education to offer Encore, an evening program for adults over 50 that offers a sample of



Monday’s woodcarvers group displays impressive talent.

activities for those looking to make new friends or experience fun outings without any commitment. In recent months, offerings included music by Greenwood Tree, a mystery dinner show by the Fridley Community Theater and Ted Talks which introduces mind-blowing conversation on a variety of topics. This month a Fitness Sampler will give seniors the opportunity to try out Zumba, yoga and even Pickle-ball!

Fridley offers one of the largest and most comprehensive senior programs in the area, and Connie will be the first to tell you that she does not do it alone. Every program at the center has a lead volunteer, someone who communicates with Connie and heads up the group. Volunteers also help with the dining program, charity sewing groups and special events.

In addition to Connie, other friendly faces in the Senior Center office include Jeanne Moffat and Jean Penn. Jeanne provides invaluable front desk help. The Older Worker Program through Anoka County benefits the Senior Center with receptionist help and gives workers additional experience to help them transition to the current workplace. Jeanne is in her second year with the Senior Center (each worker is offered a 3-year contract). Jean Penn coordinates the Chores & More program. Her focus is to match independent contractors with seniors who need a helping hand with things such as cleaning and snow removal. The goal of the Chores & More program is to keep seniors living independently and in their homes safely as long as possible. This grant-supported program has been around for 25 years.



Senior Center staff: Jeanne Moffat, Connie Thompson and Jean Penn

“Connie never says no,” says Jean. “It is one of her biggest strengths. She always tries to find a way to make something work.”

Last year, Connie initiated Honor Our Vets, which continues to build interest, and she is continuously brainstorming ideas for the future. Our community’s young-at-heart will always find a place to share ideas, talents, friendship and education at the Fridley Senior Center.



Volunteer leader Jean talks to Campaign of Cheer sewing group about the current needs in the community.

Raingardens and Landscaping for Water Quality

April 16, from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Fridley Community Center
6085 7th St. NE, Fridley, MN 55432

Guest Speaker: Mitch Haustein from Anoka Conservation District, an experienced raingarden designer and water conservation practitioner.

- Types of raingardens
- Characteristics of successful raingardens
- Design ideas and sample landscape plans
- Long-term maintenance of raingardens
- Dealing with debris in curbside raingardens, and use of infiltration devices
- Tips for establishment

City of Fridley Environmental Planner Kay Qualley will present plant choices and options for tweaking home landscaping to improve water quality, capture rain water runoff and create more sustainable landscapes.

- Native plant guidance & plant sourcing
- Sustainable lawn care for water quality
- City of Fridley Raingarden Program
- Beautiful photos and inspirational ideas!

Fee: \$10.00 at the door.

Participants will receive raingarden take-home guides, pollinator information and more!
To register, call 763-572-3594 or email: Kay.Qualley@FridleyMN.gov.



This Month at the Fridley Senior Center:

Legal Wise, Divorce and Estate Planning:
April 21, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Defensive Driving, 4-Hour Refresher Course:
April 9 or May 20, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

American History Series: WWI/World:
April 29, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Anoka County Cribbage Tournament:
April 24, starting at 9:00 a.m.

Great Decisions, China’s Foreign Policy:
April 21, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Foot Care Clinic:
April 15, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

To sign up or for more information on these or any of our clubs, programs or seminars, call 763-502-5150.



Recreation Opportunities for Creative Kids in the Summer

Full days of continuous recreation and enrichment activities for up to 10 weeks this summer.

An ACTIVE Program for ACTIVE Kids!

\$130/week (\$30 daily fee available)
Fridley Community Center & Commons Park

For youth who have completed grades K-7.
7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. • Monday - Friday • June 8 - August 14

Minecraft Movie Making • Painting • Flag Rugby • LEGO Fun • Rocketry • Fencing • Soccer • Clay • Lacrosse • Archery • and many more!

763-572-3570 | www.FridleyMN.gov

